The Hills of Heaven

G. Allana



THE HILLS OF HEAVEN

(Selected Poems)

G. ALLANA

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Preface

A Poet is gifted with a keen sensitivity that compels him to protest against all forms of tyranny, human suffering, sorrow and pain. From times immemorial these disabilities have been the common lot of mankind. It seems as if Man is powerless in the hands of arbitrary and unforeseen forces who toy and play with his destiny. Innumerable poets, singing in different languages, have dwelt upon the helplessness of Man. It is, therefore, to be only expected that some of my poems are a protest against man's inhumanity to Man.

Every form of artistic creation is the outward manifestation of the inner compulsions of the artist to build bridges of communication with his fellow human beings. But, in order to be of any significant value, there has to be a two-way traffic on these bridges. The flower-garden of creativity cannot flourish in a barren soil, which breeds exclusivity, resulting in a monologue, where the Poet speaks, and his audience listens, but does not understand. Words are the tools that the Poet uses, in order to enrich the canvas of his creative artistry. Poetry, resulting from such experimentation, surfaces like stars that emerge from the depths of the sky, illumining the darkness of the night of not-knowing.

It is very difficult, if not impossible, for the Poet to fully express with mere words as his tools the spark of Light that has awakened in his Soul, which is like a whisper from the bosom of the unknown. But, at times in his moments of inspiration or mystical enlightenment, the pen of the Poet does give voice to his transcendental experiences.

Modern Man is oblivious, if not contemptuous, of the world of the spirit. But, if mankind is to be saved from the

dark chaos of spiritual annihilation, then a re-dedication to the inner life must be proclaimed and practised by Man. Thus, it is in the calm and tranquility of the world of their soul that the mystics hear the silent voices of intuition, which sing to them deathless songs of Truth, of Beauly, of Love, of God, enabling them to live their lives in tune with the Infinite through mystical experiences. Man comes to identify himself. with God, that means that he identifies himself with all mankind. When one reaches this stage, then all barriers and obstacles that stand in the form of race, caste, country, continents are obliterated, and the pulse-beat of his great awakening becomes quickened.

Most of the poems in this book have a mystical content. Whether they are acceptable to a particular individual or not depends on that individual's temperament. Be that as it may, I have written my poems as they are, and it is for the reading public to write its judgement on them.

21st March 1980. **G. ALLANA,**

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The Hills Of Heaven

My path is set and lies before me;
I will tread upon its measureless nakedness,
And reach the great beyond and its emptiness;
A mystery that will baffle human fraternity
Till Time lengthens itself into eternity.
I will delve deep into the mysteries
Of the sun, saturn and mars, those celestial luminaries,
Where endless space and bottomless void intermingle,
And make the universe one, indivisible and single,
And I will kick them, as I kick a foot-ball.
My thoughts flash like meteors across the skies,
And I feel as if I am in a fool's paradise.
I have given up fighting and dreaming of revolution.
As I rise on the crest of the wave of evolution,
My flag flutters over every hill of heaven,
And they are not one or two, but more than seven.

Withdraw From The Noise Of The World

The harsh hurricanes that hurry over the breasts of oceans
Make their thunderous voice heard, but do not reveal their faces,
Like the miseries and unbearable hardships of mortal man,
Leading to exposure, to darkness and to bleak abandonment
On the forlorn crags of the miserable mountains of life.
Stone like, man sleeps, his dark dreams moving in a whirl,
Gripping him with pain, more ancient than the life of his Soul.
The tracks and forms of his suffering may alter and change,
As change the patterns of wrinkles on the face of the snow dissolving.
But one has to cross this bridge over the treacherous streams,
And nothing is accomplished if one only tarries to scream.
The spirit of Man wages war on many fronts and fields,
No single defeat deters or distracts it from its purpose.
Man must learn to withdraw himself from the noise of the world ;
To save human lives the lighthouse stands aloof and detached.

Defenceless Against His Own Greatness

Man has made himself so great in scientific technology,
That he gasps defenceless against his own greatness.
He lives a life of eternal strife, unending struggle,
Alone in the midst of mountains of his own making,
Like a poet who has drawn a picture of ugliness.
Probably a mask under which he is hiding his own face,
And he has abondoned the struggle to rediscover it,
Afraid it might reveal something terrib le, dreadful.
Man has come to this sorry plight, as he believed
He was omnipotent, omniscient, he was everything,
Trying to usurp from God the attributes that are solely His.
What a puny little creature is this Man ?
He does not know himself, nor does he know Him.
The enjoyment of a joyful life lies in acknowledging God,
As the source of all power, of all Creation, on earth and in heaven.
If Man continues to live in his unbridled arrogance,
He is bound to become a leaning, worm-eaten tree.
The world is heavy with the burden of suffering,
And I write my song of affliction on this perishable paper.

Ever Present Infinity

The world spreads before me like a turbulent ocean,
Where I live in the undying indestructible present,
Where there is no heaven on either side to anchor in,
Where there is no path, charted or uncharted,
Leading to a mysterious, far away, ever receding goal.
Infinity is both the journey and the ultimate port.
Who says Infinity is a myth or a negation of the end itself ?
It is only when the Soul grips firmly the rudder of equilibrium,
And fixes its gaze on the destination of Infinity here and now,
That it will cease to be tormented by the terrors of the ocean.
The opposite of Infinity is unending annihilation;
This would mean the extinction of all God's creation.
The concept of Infinity is unworthy of ever entering
The consciousness of a Soul that is permanently slumbering.

Reality And Knowledge

Knowledge enables man to transcend himself,
And to break the barriers between his self and the world;
It is not through restrictions imposed from without
That man is enabled to discover his responsibilities,
But through a discipline that finds its birth within him,
Which is the ultimate aim and end of highest knowledge.
From without to within is the path that one must choose.
Knowledge, like light, does not pick and select
Between objects that it touches and illuminates;
It encompasses everything as do the rays of the sun;
Its destination knows no frontiers, it is universal.
Be not like a scientist for whom there is no world within,
For whom reality is merely a perceived appearance.
The fragile meshes of the net of scientific inquiry
Cannot capture and contain the substance of Reality.
Reality is a knowledge not based on scientific investigation,
Nor on mathematical formulas, nor on scholastsc speculation.
Reality closes its gates on and eludes the grip of science,
It opens its arms and embraces the man of true knowledge.

The Goal Of Man

In the noise and dim of the market-place is born hostility;

In the realms of solitude flourishes and prospers inner tranquility.

And yet if the world around me were to fall in ruins,

I would not remain detached, unmoved, indifferent;

I would invoke curses on such callous ego-centrism.

What matter it, if my body were to perish for the sake of a worthy cause,

So long as my Soul continues to remain the master of itself.

Peace descends, when men abstain from violence and war,

Another name for mass self-annihilation and destruction.

But peace must not be passive, it must be dynamic, active,

Built as a spiritual mansion on the ashes of mental inertia.

Learn to be a collaborator in the magnificent work of creation.

Let the good of mankind stand on a higher pedestal than your own interest.

Man is neither wholly good nor wholly brute or animal;

In his very essence he is a mixture and an alloy of the two.

The goal of Man is to rise from the base instincts of the animal

To the higher destiny of entering the Kingdom of God.

i

My birth the i in me does not remember.
This i that was born with the looks of innocence;
Its path was soon to be plagued by troubles,
And invisible webs were to be weaved by spiders;
Not long after, it learnt it was heir to despair;
Carried on the frightening shoulders of angry tornados,
It struck its head against clouds of pain and sorrow.
How many billions of persons had life cheated?
And this i was yet to build new kingdoms,
Whose walls, alas, were prone to decay,
Raising to the ground all that was built laboriously.
But one day, on the rising waves of distant dreams,
At the inevitable meeting point of life and death,
This i will have unravelled the mystery
Of all that lies coiled in the shell of i.

A Sorrowful Song

The stirring dreams of youth lie buried
Like cold lava in an extinct valcano
That will never leap to life again.
Longings no longer stir my heart-strings,
Nor do I thrill with the vibrations of spring.
In the winter of my old age I close my eyes,
But I never arrive in the garden of yesterday's years.
Petals fall and paint a weird scene
Of a period of life I have left far behind;
I hear them say from beyond their graves,
"We were also once roses that bloomed in full glory".
I transcribe the ashes in my breast on a piece of paper,
And my tears are loud with sorrowful rhymes.

Life

Who says life is one continuous glittering dream?

Who says life is a stage, where actors receive applause?

Who says life is a comedy, echoing jokes and laughter?

Who says life is a restful pillow, made up of soft cotton and
down?

Who says life is heaven, where the sun never sets on bliss?

Who says life is a meadow, where one can graze in leisure?

Who says life is an orchard, where bees hum and gather honey?

Who says life is a flowering garden, where butterflies flitter in
freedom?

Life is a tragedy, where the earth is besmeared with blood.

Life is a prison, where Man is sentenced to hard labour.

Life is an ocean, greedy the swimmers to swallow.

Life is a grave-yard, where worms eat the flesh of Time.

Life is a seething cauldron, where Man curses all day.

Life is a bridge, spanning space from the cradle to the grave.

Life is a meeting place, where beginning and ending converge.

Life is a battle-ground, where Man never wins a war.

The Battle For Peace

Concealing the daggers of death under their arm-pits,
Deceitful people proclaim platitudes of peaceful purposes,
Only to deceive not the world entire but themselves alone.
But this has not overpowered the will of Man to resist them,
And the dragon of despair has not snapped the strength of mankind.
The arms race that leads humanity to an inevitable holocaust
Is justified as the natural progency of progress of pseudo-science
That masquerades under the false name of unraveling Truth.
The war mongers are howling and are athirst for human blood,
And they do not bother about niceties and petty little things,
Like adducing justification for their diabolical deeds.
They keep boiling the seething cauldron of chaos and confusion
Which tends to obliterate individuality and even identity.
The battle for Peace must assume universal proportions,
So that the forces that are bent on human destruction
May hide their heads in the burning sands of remorse and repentance.

The Transcendent World

The minaret stands with its head erect,
Silently aiming its pointing finger at the sky.
The muezin raises his sonorous voice,
Calling the faithful to prayers.
They adore, worship, prostrate themselves;
Then they turn the beads of their rosaries,
Silently reverentially,
Undisturbed, undistracted,
Their inner eyes transfixed on the Unseen.
Invisible is the One they seek;
Inaudible the whispers of His answers.
What an experience in the transcendent world?
Bewildered, they leave the sanctuary,
Only to return on the following day,
To more determinedly and devoutly pray.

Silence Has Many Voices

Silence is deceptive, it has many voices
That can only be heard in the solitude
And stillness of the world within.
Pain, joy, defeat, delusion, pitfalls, agony,
These are rungs in the ladder of experience.
But, then, can there be a victor in the war of tears?
Life does not give one unlimited choices,
Although man's imagination may be
As powerful as the force of a strong wind.
Existence has proved to be a long and weary day;
Death seems to be a thing to desire;
For, it will usher in a new and promising dawn.
It is only when one has learnt
To listen to the reverential music of silence
That there is kindled within one's self a flame
Of chastened, selfless, undying Love.

That Solitude Called Death

In the midst of Life, I crawl on the ground
Heading for that solitude called Death,
From where no voice can call me back.
The blood in my veins has become sluggish;
Time has put dams across its course,
And I walk on trembling limbs
In search of sustenance to keep my colony alive.
So, I keep my tryst with appointed tasks,
Until I will be swallowed by that darkness,
Which is rushing on to drag me into silence;
Utter, uninterrupted, unending silence.

Significance Of Action

Thought sires intention, and action is the progeny of intention;
Of ourselves action is both manifestation and misrepresentation;
Of our deepest and innermost being a visible expression.
Every act rests on and involves personal responsibility;
Every act affects the spiritual universe in its totality.
It is common human weakness to disclaim personal involvement,
If the consequences of an act bring in their wake remorse and forment.
It is the gift of the gods to have taught man to labour and toil,
To bring forth flower and fruit from a difficult or unyielding soil.
Do not look upon work as a punishment from Paradise;
To awaken mental activity it is a ray of light from the skies.
The main preoccupation of every man is "What shall I eat?"
This is the cry raised in every city, in every house, in every street.
The only and effective answer is, "Put your shoulders to the wheel. Work.
"Join the soil-tillers. Your responsibility do not shirk".
You can only see your actions in all their magnificence;
But you cannot witness their consequence and significance.
In silence is born the consciousness of one's potentialities;
In solitude are nourished one's dreams and capabilities.
To bear fruit is a sufficient and desired goal for the tree;
It is not for the tree to eat it; for that, of course, others are free.

My Inner Chamber Of Silence

Within me a silent desire nestles to go beyond myself,
Beyond the limitations of time, beyond the boundaries of space.
There is a magic silence in the kingdom of the stars;
I wonder if there is a vacant living room in the realm of Mars.
Unarmed, I endeavaur to win the wars of philosophy,
Until my ambitions plant the flag of triumph and victory,
And history acclaims me among the famous ones,
To be revered while living; immortal after death.
I take a quick leap into the unfathomed sea of dreams,
Which is boundless, vaster than the radius of my imagination.
There are no birds nor roses, the trees stand naked,
And, yet, within the rivers of my blood, a soft voice says, "Spring".
I feel I have become bigger than the entire universe;
I hear my Soul play on the flute a song of victory,
And its echoes revibrate in my inner chamber of silence.

The Frankenstein Monster

Twentieth century ! You have sharp claws.
I wish I could blunt them with my songs.
Who created you to be a Frankenstein monster?
You are out to destroy your own progentitor.
Who will teach you to stop your murderous march,
Bent on pursuing a course of senseless maiming?
Who will quench your insatiable thirst for victory
Over your own Creator's helpless progeny?
Peace must be within reach of today,
And not a matter of speculation centuries hence.
Make the world worthy for all men to live in,
Lest your blood-stained hands compel you
To hang your head down in shame before other centuries.

Knock At The Gate Of My Soul

I address myself to all humanity.
Alas, it appears fatigued before its time,
And almost dead for lack of direction.
If you need the sacred gift of song,
Come and knock at the gate of my Soul,
To win back your lost senses.
My songs are like the tranquil dawn,
Bestowing rest on night-weary stars;
They are not like the burning heat of the sun,
That extinguishes light in the eyes of the stars.
The route that you will then chart out for yourself
Will be purposeful. meaningful, rewarding,
And you will tread it without fear or trembling.

Reunion With Love

If you wish to charge the battery of galaxies
With your sweetness, gentleness and reveries,
Then learn the art of crawling before your victim,
Which art one learns in the secret school of the Soul.
Freedom can only flourish and thrive in forgiveness,
That cleanses with its waters the smudges of sin.
Wrap the shawl of love over the wounded hearts,
And give to the world what you possess lavishly;
For, the more you give the more will you possess.
Thus will Immortality arrive and knock at your door,
To place a golden crown over your mortal head.
Thrilled with joy, you will tiptoe to kiss your dreams,
And the ghosts of grief will continue to sleep perpetually,
Enabling you to enjoy your reunion with Love eternally.

The Shadows Of Self-Made Fears

Man mars his adventure on the high roads of life
By throwing across his path the shadows of his self-made fears,
And thus misses the most precious of God's gifts—
The capacity to be his own full self.
Oh, God, why have you bestowed upon me this knowledge
That I can conceive and speak and write my thoughts?
I wish I were an ignoramus;
I would be so blissful in my ignorance;
My gratitude would have overflown without words.
My soul would have outpoured love, without voice.
Now my dreams diffuse,
And are deformed into rites of doubts;
They rustle past in white shrouds,
And are buried in the grave of time and space.
But while I live, what will erase
The scars of fears that have left their mark
Upon my credulous and trembling mind?

Until My Dreams Come True

Crowned with the aura of hopefulness
I stood on the edge of a forlon shore;
I took an involuntary plunge,
I was soon in it,
In the vast sea of my imagination.
The waves could not conquer me;
The fury of the sea could not drown me.
All glory to my dream,
Which was like a page from the books of romance.
I was like a medieval chivalrous knight,
Living to give joy to receptive hearts.
I will continue to swim in that ocean,
Until my ambitions are won,
Until my dreams come true.
Thus I will wrest
Recognition now
And immortality for all time.

I Lighted A Candle

In my hand the wandering rod,
I journeyed aimlessly on the road,
And, my goodness, I was hungry,
Famished, starved,
A scorpion stung my stomach;
My feet were pierced with thorns,
And drops of blood oozed,
As if it was a martyr's blood.
Ghosts chased me on my journey,
I was frightened, jittery;
I rattled the beads of my rosary,
And whispered muffled prayers,
I was as white as a coffin shroud.
I betook myself to a place,
Where people talked to God
In a language understood by Him.
They burnt incense to awaken
Some unseen, sleeping spirits.
I lighted a candle within the temple of my soul,
And it continues to burn
As resplendent as my awakened faith.

Eternal And Undying Present

The man who is forever looking back into the past,
Or gazing intently into the crystal glass of the future,
He it is who is erecting round himself walls of unhappiness;
Such a man is whipped constantly by the lashes of unhappiness.
The happy man lives in the eternal and undying present;
He penetrates through it and takes possession of it.
To expect and hope for happiness in the days to come
Is to invite the pangs and festering sores of frustration.
The days that are gone lie buried in the womb of the past.
And he who looks back is living among the dead.
These are methods of seeing problems the wrong way about.
Your life must derive its sustenance and strength
From the present, rooted in the soil of an inner calm.
For, it is the gluttonous appetites of a restless mind
That never find anything that is truly abiding and peaceful.
The seeds that were sown in yesterday's season
Descended into the darkness of the earth and have dissolved.
Today the tree rises higher and higher with its leafy branches,
Rustling softly and delicately in the kingdom of light,
And its majesty, equilibrium and ceaseless movement
Pay homage to the ever fresh and undying present.

The Tree Of Peace

The tree of peace cannot fiourish in the soil of hate;
Violence cannot be uprooted, by unleashing violence as answer.
If you wish on you contentment and happiness to descend,
Give up fretting over defeat, or rejoincing over victory.
Do not walk all your days in the valley of shadows;
Shed fear, cease to tremble, hold your head high.
When you hear the wailing of hearts afflicted with pain,
Annoint them with the balm of love and compassion.
The echoes of the roar and thunder of the rising waves of
 the sea
Never penerate the ears of the smiling moon in the sky;
But the soft strains of music of the sitar and flute
Make the stars smile and dance rapturously.
The cup of human sorrow is full to the brim and may spill over;
It is not its lot to see green pastures or tranquil waters.
There will never be peace everlasting in this plagued world,
So long as Man continues to raise his hand against his fellow
 men.

Towards Universality

In muffled solitude, protected by invisible walls,
I turn over the tear-bedewed pages of history,
Chronicling the adventures of extinct tribes and empires,
And find as if it were the private diary of Man,
Recording mile-stones since his journey on earth began.
I feel as if I have only matriculated in that subject,
And I have yet to learn the models to copy and patterns to follow.
The womb of wisdom is injected with conception,
And civilisations and cultures see their birth.
Hammurabi inscribes his laws on chiselled granite;
The dawn and twilight of glory and grandeur of one name
Yields place to another with another nomenclature.
Greek glory that throbbed and flourished once,
Was snuffed out by the thundrous march of Alexander.
Many Caesars came, saw and they conquered,
And were themselves vanquished by succeeding Caesars.
Oh, how I wish that Man's giant dreams of today
May mature into reality at tomorrow's harvest time,
And that short-sighted and narrow yesterdays
May tilt in the future towards universality.

Nearer To God's Heaven

Throughout my tired years, journeying through Life,
I divided my time between the past and the future,
The present walked by, without my recognising it.
On every block of white marble, interspersed with black veins,
I read my own foreboding, awful epitaph,
"Here lies one, who once lived, but now is dead".
All that I tried to be is traced like tracks on my path
Of granite stone, blasted by a thundering electrick shock.
Do not erect a statue, in the likeness of myself,
For, I have been obliterated by the hands of Death.
The graveyard is a playground where only the dead frolick;
Here they dream of that which never became a reality.
But, now they are further from the reach of harm than ever before;
Now they are nearer to God's heaven than life could ever allow.

I Stand Before The Mirror

I stand before the mirror and look into it.
Who is this old man staring at me?
His face is lined with wrinkles,
The light in his eyes has faded and dimmed.
It is difficult to believe that once
This face was flushed and bubbled with youth.
I am reminded of the shadow of Narcissus
That the god beheld in the clear waters of the pond.
Undeterred, I break to splinters this mirrored glass,
Drop a pebble in the fabled pond,
And then busy myself in gathering
And putting into their proper places
The broken bits of my own self,
The focal point of my youth and old age.

The Shadow Of Torture

Do not be like one who puts chains
Round the necks of his fellow-men.
Learn to be a hero of history
By becoming a breaker of chains,
A champion of human dignity.
Do not lure people with sugar-coated promises,
That will prove to be as bitter as quinine.
History records that some pretenders,
Instead of breaking chains,
Have forged yet stronger chains,
And perpetuated their despotic hold,
Building dungeon cells
That were like hell on earth,
Where the shadow of torture lengthened,
To become the apparition of endless pain.

Fact Or Fiction

I am like an insignificant drop of the sea,
Wandering aimlessly, in some abyss,
Of sometimes silent, sometimes turbulent stream,
Where time and space are unknown entities.
The storms, walking over my head,
In a shrill voice whistle a primeval tune,
That reminds me of my presence
In that now forgotten Paradise,
While the waves race breathlessly
Towards the shore and its tranquility.
As I lie, frightened, in my seclusion,
The earth orbits the sun,
Round and round,
Like a merry-go-round.
Are time, space and feeling real,
Or merely creatures of my imagination;
Not fact, but fiction?

Learn

Learn to triumph over the temptations of sensual desire;
Learn to transform it into a desire of a higher kind;
Let not contemplation of physical beauty
Give rise in your mind to sinful thoughts;
Let the ship of your Destiny lead you
To anchor itself in a safe and blessed haven.
Let not perishing beauty become for you a tormenting longing,
For, like a flower with white petals and saffron coloured heart,
Beauty is a fleeting shadow, today here, tomorrow for ever
 gone.
Learn to estrange yourself from your baser self;
Learn not to be a stranger to your own noble self;
Learn to read and understand yourself like an open book.
Learn the knowledge that opens the windows of the soul;
Learn through knowledge to kiss the peaks of wisdom.
Learn to be mute in this garrulous caravansary;
Learn to shed the desire to hear your own voice.
Learn to be the master of your own Destiny,
Which is not an act of exterior circumstances,
Over which you have no command or control;
Learn to influence creatively the world
In which you have to live out your life,
So that Fate and Destiny become mere tablets
On which the pen of your mind inscribes its Will.

The Stars Wondered

I borrowed a thought from my weary past
And took it home to lie in bed with me;
Soon dreams, like meteors, blazed across
The skies of my mind to vanish into an unseen void.
The stars twinkled and wondered anxiously
What would be the next line of my poem of dreams.
The footsteps of the solitude of the night
Echoed in the empty caves of loneliness
Of my puzzled and perturbed mind.
I shuddered at the approaching shadow of tomorrow,
That loomed like a gloomy cloud on the horizon of mortality.
My life seemed wrapped in a snow-white shroud,
And its riddle appeared far beyond my powers
To comprehend or to solve its mystery.

Triumph Over The Fear Of Action

So long as I do not act, do I really exist?
In that land between real being and non-being
Sincerity is only another word for wishful thinking.
Like Life, sincerity dwells within the heart of the performance,
Of the act itself, it is action, dynamic action.
When I begin a dialogue with myself,
I sow the seeds of consciousness,
And the dialogue with the world begins to bear fruit.
I discover there is a gap between what I have
And that which I desire;
So the toiling hands of my consciousness
Get busy closing that gap without ever succeeding.
I find within me dwells all humanity,
The best and the worst, in uneasy proximity.
My will is poised to make a thrust and act;
This is the beginning of all action, dynamic and meaningful.
I find my Life is now a journey towards that goal;
This is a discovery of great essence and import.
Within my soul there thirsts an aspiration,
Which, perhaps, forever may unfulfilled lie;
For, to kiss the throne of the Infinite is its aim.
I have given voice to a slumbering secret,
An have thus triumphed over the fear of confession.

Indifference Is Stagnation

The day has ended, what difference does it make?

When all the days will have ended, what difference will it make?

If this is the attitude you adopt towards life,

Then surely you are not sensitive, discerning, but indifferent;

And indifference is abdication, it is stagnation;

It is in fact the death of your spiritual self.

Refuse to accept the happening of every moment as inevitable,

Dare to challenge and defy at every step of your life.

Leave upon the world the mark of the imprint of your actions.

In this lies the triumph of the spirit of the Awakened Man.

Yes, if your so strive, you may reach the threshold of true understanding,

Which by the name of cynical egoism cannot be called.

It is, in fact, the act of dethroning self-love or self-worship.

To be indifferent is to renounce life itself,

A state from which there is no resurrection or re-birth.

From Eternity To Eternity

What is the secret behind the coming into being of my existence?

It was a silent and sudden eruption of Eternity into Time.

Then began a period of trials, experiments and experience,

To which my life stands totally and irrevocably committed.

Thus began my search for a passion to fill my soul to capacity;

Until I succeeded my life was joyless, goalless and worthless.

I found myself lost in this gigantic cave called the world,

Where I sought values to which I could devote and dedicate myself.

Despite material pelf and conforts that I gathered on my journey,

I missed inner certitude, equilibrium, peace and tranquility.

Now, when I have reached the summit of my life after long waiting,

I tremble as I approach the dawn of a new era of understanding.

My love for the Essence has brought in its wake the discovery of wisdom,

And the universe spreads before my eyes like a plain without horizons.

I no longer stand in separation from the world outside myself;

Ever new relationships between me and the World unveil their faces.

Even Death whispers its mysteries into my ears:

"From Eternity you came, to Eternity I will take you".

A Trail Of Bloody Tracks

My lips are bruised with bleeding;
My tongue is dumb,
Shut in the cage of speechlessness;
My heart, scared at the sight of suffering
Burns with the heat of high-tension wire;
The network of my nerves is near breaking point.
I wish I could unhinge the prison-bars of my being,
And take a plunge into the bottomless abyss;
I wish the hangman's noose could snuff out my breath.
I feel as if I am a battered pound of flesh,
Pounded by an invisible and impassive terror.
All this because I suffer, as a Poet should,
In the presence of human misery and tragedy.
Therefore, I am not deaf to the dove of Peace
That weeps in the crumbled ruins of civilisation.
Everything that survives will one day die,
But the celestial bodies will survive.
Alas, man has sundered himself from the Nameless One,
From the Infinite that defies description;
And so he blunders from error to error,
Leaving behind a trail of bloody tracks.

Eternal Questions

Am I a shadow that flits between joy and sorrow?
Am I a bundle of bones and flesh that will crumble tomorrow?
Will I one day be reduced to a handful of ashes?
Is my existence a fraud or rooted in reality?
Where will I be, when my soul bids good-bye to my body?
Am I a fragment of God to manifest His presence?
Am I a riddle, inscrutable, incomprehensible?
Am I the last lingering drop of morning dew
About to drop from the perch of a trembling leaf,
To vanish and lie forgotten under the tomb of Time?
Am I falsehood made incarnate
That will accidentally become one with the Ultimate Truth?
Am I a prisoner in the hands of decay and destruction?
Am I a creation, indestructable, death-proof?
Why has my existence been made a question mark?
Why am I a puzzle and a mystery to my own self?

Karachi, My City

Tall, shining, marbled buildings crane their necks skywards,
And make various angles against the sky-line,
Screening from human gaze chunks of starry space.
Nearby, lie on naked floor within their huts with many holes
The tired, unemployed, famished humble dwellers,
Who look at the magnificent walls and wonder,
While the stinking open sewerage around fouls the air.
The dazzling neon-lights that dot the streets
Make fainter look the distant dome of night;
Yet one can espy here and there a patch of sky
Stitched with twinkling stars on a yard of dark blue velvet.
The city has expanded, its seams are bursting
With human tides galloping over all available land.
Citizens close their ears with hands to dull the thunderous noise;
They shut their mouths and noses to be free from the gas-
polluted air.
But then there are familiar land-marks,
Which recall to mind fond and lingering memories,
That are mile-stones and have become a part of my life.
And so, frequently foot-loose across the world's frontiers,
I yearn to be back home, back to my city, Karachi.

My Fellow-Travellers

Suffering the sorrowful weeping of the young and old,

Of the children and mothers, of the maimed and the disabled,

Of those whose bodies float in the cess-pool of despair,

Of those whose hearts have been burnt to ashes,

I have walked, woefully all my living days,

In the valley canopied by the shadow of the dead.

Every waft of breeze bears on its wings and brings within hearing

The sad notes of their bewildered and agonised suffering.

The sky of life is overcast with dark and foreboding clouds;

Where is the exhilirating music of joy and laughter?

Where are the green pastures of love and happiness?

Where are the angels of peace, harmony and brotherhood?

Why don't my hands lift to lend succour to my fellow-travellers?

Unending Immobility

When the game is over, all men depart,
Descending concrete steps in a hole dug in the earth;
Over them clouds pause, shed tears and pass away;
But they remain undisturbed in their timeless sleep.
They have lost the capacity to discuss and debate,
To be tenacious, unflinching, unyielding,
In order to clinch an argument and prove victorious.
Their mind is as dead as the bones of their skulls,
Incapable of surveying what they had left behind.
Gluttonous worms have come to fatten themselves,
And the rust of decay has worked on the ironplates of existence
With no room to go backward or forwards,
There they lie and rot, in unending immobility,
Beyond the reach of earthly resurrection,
Beyond the reach of earthly mortality.

Here In An Ancient Graveyard

(Written after a visit to the ancient graveyard at Makli Hills in Thatta, about 60 miles from Karachi, Pakistan).

Here in the midst of death the sun does not rise;
Here forgotten chapters of history sleep in obscurity under every tomb;
Here the worms weary away their time eating human flesh;
Here none kindles a lamp, and no light leaps to life;
Here the jackals venture forth at night on their digging operations;
Here the bats in the blindness prey on birds and urinate;
Here the glory and garrullonsness of the day does not reign;
Here solitude permeates the sorrowful air here, there, everywhere;
Here the scanty foliage vomits an occean of tears;
Here even the dogs are silenced and cease to bark;
Here the snakes hiss, make love and breed more snakes;
Here the epitaphs speak of yesterdays not of tomorrows;
Here man's eyes are dried up, they have wept so much;
Here the brain is befogged and benumbed with grief;
Here the name of the buried converge into one name—the dead;
Here even petrified human hearts are melted to grief;
Here there is a thickly populated colony of spiders;
Here the hungry ants vie and howl for tiny bits of morsels;
Here the wind whispers, its shrillness frozen to silence;
Here the world has finally come to a grinding halt;
Here lie underground the skeletons of hopes that once throbbed in the hearts of men.

An Enthralling Dream

The sun had gone to sleep in its colourful bed,
Within me stirred the mystic longings of the night,
And I silently stood in the midst of the moon-washed light.
I heard the echoes of the soft foot-steps of my Soul,
Leading me to the tranquil shores of meditation.
My heart surrendered to the blissful hours,
And strolled on the sands of the ocean of Love.
I heard You and Your enchanting voice in the music of the waves,
And saw Your wonedrous Image in the mirror of the moon.
Nature looked on at me with affection and tenderness,
While Your Hand caressed my checks, as if I were a child,
And an enthralling dream enfolded me in its embrace.

The Portals Of Paradise

Listen, Erum, lend me your ears,
My search for you began, since Time was born.
I have been travelling onwards and onwards,
Endeavouring to glimpse your beautiful face,
Through the gloomy clouds that veil your form.
For centuries have I brooded and wondered,
But I have not yet unravelled the mystery.
You elude my grasp, my comprehension.
Wars continue to be waged, blood continues to be shed;
Man does not put back his sword in its sheath.
Where is that Peace that can stop once for all
The wanton shedding of human blood on earth?
Uncertainty sprawls before me like endless Eternity;
But one day I will enter the portals of Paradise,
Where dwell for ever tranquility and serenity.

United Nations

Some call you house of hope, others house of hate,
Where nations sharpen their tongues in open forums,
Only to aggravate suffering and to add to world's woes.
Here debates bring into being dark clouds
That prevent light from entering warrning minds.
Nevertheless, there congregate many men of good-will
From all the four corners of the world,
Who are symbols of a future hope
That a day will dawn, when man will have succeded
Through toil and tears and errors
To usher in an era of world disarmament,
When the metal of guns will have been melted
To fashion out of it plough shares to till the land.

The Eternal In Me

I am garrulous my words fill the world;
I wish I could refrain from speaking and writing.
In the void of upper space is utter stillness.
The sheet of light hides the face of darkness,
While questions seek to articulate the voice of answers.
My mirror reflects the rays of the far off sun,
Blinding my eyes to unravel the mystery of light.
Shadows flit across, leaving no trace;
The smoke of candle-flame, lingers awhile,
Soon to be devoured by the jaws of nothingness.
I laugh, and my laughter fills the air,
But its echoes disappear, and its sound dies,
Only the bright moon of my soul does not dim,
Enabling me to realise the Eternal in me.

Self-Slaughter

In the jungle of life, man wanders, bewildered,
As he hears a savage cry that pierces
Through the barren wilderness of time.
All voices and words are drowned
By the brute cry around him, "Murder, Murder".
He opens his bag of bombs and missiles,
And the earth shivers in pain and agony,
Convulsively vomiting out blood.
The debris of stones and cement and marble
Bury under their massive weight
Maimed, mutilated and murdered bodies of men.
This age of fire and flame will burn up
Cities and countries and continents and cottages.
What will remain of Life on earth?
Blots of blood, telling the tale
Of man's self-slaughter and utter extinction.

Don't Intrude

Don't intrude into the kingdom of my solitude,
Where serenity has spread its magic spell.
It stores the skeletons of my dreams of yesterdays,
Whose ringing echoes give birth to new reveries.
I muse and move in this realm in silence,
As in my ears ring the notes of my songs that throb
In the womb of conception to see their birth.
Visions of beauty and uniqueness flash across my skies,
And I behold their rainbow, spell bound.
Here, sometimes, I dream far beyond my wisdom,
And my soul ventures forth to dance in ecstasy.
I am myself the door-keeper of my own solitude,
And I refuse permission to those that wish to enter,
Lest my paradise should dissolve aud perish for ever.

The Mind And Reality

The mind is for ever creating reality after its own image,

Concepts such as mortality and immortality, virtue and vice, right and wrong.

Mental explorations extend the horizons of the imagination,

And the pen and the chisel and brush become prolific in their creation.

Our daily lives are loud with the cries of an unfilled aoid,

Which only the uncanny penetration of the mind can void.

While the heroes of old are lost in the fog and mist of time,

The spirits of their ghosts are contained in bottles of new wine.

Below the light-house waves dash their heads against pebble and stones;

High above the beacon-light flashes signals leading to safety.

A Homer is dead; a Shakespeare is born;

A Socrates drinks the hemlock; a Plato propounds his philosophy.

Imagination suggests that when the fair Helen opened her eyes,

The light of the rising sun spread its glamour of illumination.

Yes,

The mind is for ever creating reality after its own image.

Old And Eternal Values

They say man has been walking in the sands of wicked ways;

They say the world is heavy with sin, and will soon come to an end.

Then what about my house? What about my mother-land?

All dreams of personal recognition of national superiority

Will have dissolved like mist in the sunshine of the rising sun.

If that be so, then all care and anxiety for a future are a myth,

A phantom that one chases, but one that always eludes.

Family bonds have already begun to reach breaking point;

Enforce universal birth-control to stop human progeny.

Modern man has pinned his hopes in sophisticated weapons;

He would like to wipe away his enemy far away by merely pressing a button.

The moon is no longer the fascinating face of the traditional beloved;

Man has desecrated it, has planted his nailed boots on its face.

In the meantime, Faith and Charity have receded in the background,

And the neighbour, ignored, languishes in hunger agony, uncared.

The world takes giant strides on the path of hate and apathy,

Deaf to my songs that awaken tae music of old and eternal values.

From Destruction To Reconstruction

There is one lesson we must learn from history—

Tyrants justify their tyranny by fallacious excuses;

Wars were waged, and their reasoning was merely a smoke screen

To hide personal or national greed and aggrandisement.

Vice is vice, by whatever name you call it,

And cannot be condoned by the thunder of rhetorics or argument.

Hearts that are wounded due to hatred begin to bleed,

And yell curses, as life oozes out of the body, drop by drop.

So, I sing songs that will load the guns with powerful notes

To spray the message of Peace and Human Brotherhood.

I hope and pray they will succeed in ushering in the day,

When evil minds once bent on destruction,

Will divert their thinking and build bridges of reconstruction.

The Rod Of My Intellect

My physical body,
Afflicted by a cancerous malady,
Is about to perish already,
Which the combined prowess of humanity
Cannot root out in its entirety.
And so the tide of my life is slowly ebbing,
Soon to meet its inevitable ending.
Before the awful hands of death
Snatch away my last breath,
Let me churn the ocean of philosophy,
With the rod of my intellect,
Learning morality and history.
For, the purpose on which I am bent is
To dethrone the ideal of tyranny,
And make man free permanently.

Anger And Terror Ebb

As the garrulous bubbles fall, arise and fall again,
The water in the kettle boils and ends in steam.
As the challenging waves thunder and tear at the eroded rocks,
The soveriegnty of Time over them is retracing its steps,
And many a hull of drowned wrecks succumb and sink deeper.
These are symbols that are appropriate masters
To lead my path through the jungle of woes and misery,
And teach me compassion to sing songs of human suffering.
I am reminded of storied hell which Dante has described,
Making my temples throb, and my heart misses a beat;
Anger and terror ebb, like the receding waters of the sea.
Through the blackened midnight caverns of my mind
Enter the rays of the Dawn of that understanding,
Which illumines the Temple of my soul with Eternal Light.

With Apologies To Omar Khayyam

I. What is the source of light of the candle flame?
Why does it waste, alas, in vain its tearful frame?
The heat of Time melts its tallow to a cipher.
The rising sun will put its illumination to shame.

II. Oh, Beloved, fill my empty cup with the wine
That you give in abundance to those that stand in line,
Like beggars crying for the gift of a loaf of bread,
But charity to whom neither king nor slave decline.

III. Arm in arm let us together to the rose garden go,
Where Love on silent feet will our foot-steps follow;
Men with eyes red with jealousy our frolics will watch,
And more frenzied with defiance our Love will glow.

IV. Don't talk of death as if it is a final ending;
Of a new eternal life it is in fact the beginning;
Come let us breathe the remembered fragrance;
Come, let us invoke our Love to defy dying.

V. Of my poems you are the undying inspiration ;
My pen is drunk with your love's intoxication;
And so it sings as it races along deliriously,
Winning the world's applause and admiration.

A Lingering Fragrance Of Death

Over countries and continents as I wander,
Memories strain my heart of strings to breaking point.
In this immense kaleidoscopic panorama,
I breathe the air of yesterday's springs.
Former fun and frolics leap acrose the skies of the mind,
Like swiftly vanishing meteors;
The petals that fall in the rose garden of recollection
Fall into an incomprehensible pattern.
As ancient pain and frustrations raise their heads,
I dream as if I was back in my old world again.
I look intently in the blank writing book before me,
And my pen pours over it tears
That are transformed into rhyme and verse;
The roses that bloom today around me
Know no past regrets or future fears.
But I know that flowers perish and fall,
Leaving behind only a lingering fragrance of death.

This Wall That Divides

Who says the world is one and indivisible?
Don't you see national boundries criss-cross
Across continents, and blacken the map of the world?
When people wander across and cross frontiers,
Are they faced by bayonets, or welcomed with friendliness?
Do the winds of diplomacy drive mankind
Towards oneness, towards human brotherhood,
Or are they plunging us into a bottomless abyss,
Countless millions living and countless generations unborn?
Oh, how I wish this wall that divides man from man
Would crumble, never to raise its ugly face again,
So that man may live in uninterrupted peace and prosperity.

Urban Walls

I was born in a big busy town;
I have lived under the shadow of years
In cities in many countries;
I have wandered lonely on their streets,
Enduring hunger and toil and tears,
Witnessing the awakening of the ghosts
Of sorrow and suffering and sobbing.
One day I wandered beyond the orbit
Of the imprisoning walls of these horizons,
And was walking in the quiet countryside
On the silent banks of a winding river,
Far from the nightmare that is city life.
I saw the phantasy of a ballet in a garden,
The dance of daffodils, lilies and iris.
Oh, if I could live for ever in this Paradise,
I would not return
To the din and noise,
Under the shadow of and within those urban walls.

Immortality

It is terrible to live alone,
Surrounded by a chattering world.
Bursting, from outside,
The pyramid of my thoughts
Outstretches
Its head towards Eternity,
And, my temple veins swelling,
The Poet in me, muted,
Peeps into the eyes of Infinity.
The notes of my song,
One by one,
Awaken,
And I piece them together,
And a symphony finds its birth,
Which tilts slightly
Towards the Kingdom of Immortality.

Terror And Fears

I ascended the rainbow,
Hanging over the sunset horizon,
To tear away the masks from my doubts;
Beyond the clouds lurked
The terrors of the gathering darkness,
And I endeavoured to put to sleep
The ghastly ghosts of my fears.
I eagerly longed
That the welcome glow
Of the early dawn would arrive
And put to an end
The agony that gnawed in my heart.
The wind carried on its wings
The soft fluted notes of the song
Of a sweet throated bird,
That had just awakened.
An invisible peace descended,
And my doubts and fears vanished.
I had heard the music of the bird;
O God, will You open Your ears
And listen to my song,
Whose notes are tinged
With sombre colours of sadness.

Temple Songs Of Distant Lands

I could not be content, sitting complacently,
Rotting like the poisoned waters of the Dead Sea,
My Spirit soared heavenwards on invisible wings,
Probing the unfathomed depths of wisdom.
With Love on my lips I kissed with delight
The bleeding wounds of suffering humanity.
I was not a coward, I had risen above the crowd.
Climbing up the ladder of thought,
With eagle swiftness,
Gliding over hills and valleys,
I landed on the enchanted shores
Of the ocean of songs of transcendental wisdom.
The temple songs of distant lands
Mingled and merged into one fascinating symphony,
And I listen to that music with ecstasy.

Love Is To Be Experienced

Thought is rooted in memory,
Which for Love is a cemetry.
Thoughts are photographs made
By the invisible hands of the mind.
This process of mental revival
Is not Love, but its denial.
In Love there is no death,
Nor is there in it a negation of Life.
It is not a plant that can be cultivated,
As grows a rose bush in a garden.
Meditation and awareness the ways of thought reveal,
But the same the path to Love conceal.
Love is something to be experienced,
And not a phantom to be projected
On the silver screen of memory.

Creativity

In the silence of our libraries books shout;
We read them and dope our minds to believe;
We have more knowledge than those that wrote them.
We are caught in the whirlpool of words of others.
They wear fascinating masks,
And we commit them to memory
To repeat them as if they were magic formulas.
How words such as the priest, the democrat, the revolutionary
Induce within us sensations of delight and glory.
The vacuum within us is filled
With the thunder or the music of words;
And so we find an escape from our own ignorance.
It is only in Creativity that Man arrives
At the new kingdom of the richness of living.

The Crimes Of Man

Hung high in the skies
Was a dim, lonely star,
Far from the cluster of other stars;
The wave-length of my mind
Coincided with its own,
And I asked,
"Why has the light faded
In your once lustrous eyes?"
It sadly replied,
"For ten million years
I have been looking from my vantage-point
At the idiocincracies and crimes of Man
On the planet that is his world.
And so I have shed bitter tears
For millions of years.
I wish the light in my eyes
Is snuffed out for ever.
I am no longer able to behold
What my eyes have been seeing,
Ever since my memory can remember".

Balm On An Ailing Head

The words of my songs become blossoms,
As they drip out through the ink in my pen,
And they act like balm on the listeners' ailing head.
After they had picked up the strength of a storm
Their music and notes floated on magic wings,
And awakened lofty thoughts in slumbering minds.
They were not rivulets choked with dust,
Nor was their tongue benumbed in trying to explain.
The words had opened a golden gate,
Whereby hate, taking its bow, made its exit,
And entered the god of Love in all his majesty and glory.
Men heard the universal echo of my words,
And this helped them to wade through fear and frustration
To the enchanted shores of liberty and illumination.

Liberation From Ignorance

I am my own reward; I am my own punishment;

This is realised by those who have a keen discernment.

Within me the fires of hell and the comforts of paradise have their being,

Although their torments and pleasures I may not be experiencing.

None can dislodge me from the throne of my knowledge,

Which has been acquired during my pilgrimage through life, I acknowledge.

From my lustrous eyes mysterious light and power originate

That make the earth and planets steadily rotate.

Such a wonedrous world within me is my own kingdom,

As I have liberated myself from ignorance and its thraldom.

The Dawn Of Wisdom

The darkness of the night did not frighten the frogs;
They filled the stillness, intermittently, with their croaking,
The sweet throated birds, tired, had gone to sleep,
But the croaking was no substitute for the nightingale's songs.
With the advent of the dawn everything was itself renewing.
This renewal was nothing but life itself refreshing,
Without which death would its blanket be spreading.
Freedom does not lie in the accumulation of facts;
In action it lies, in shattering the chains of bondage.
You can girdle the earth in a plane in a few hours,
But this is not to be misunderstood as freedom,
The mystery of the imponderable can not be unmasked;
Nor is it knowledge that can unlock the gates of the Unknown.
Without the freedom characteristic of an open mind,
None can reach the cherished goal of enlightenment.
Man knows the disastrous consequences of a bloody war,
Despite this, in igniting the first spark he goes so far.
If your actions stem from your ego, your self-importance,
Sorrow and suffering will be their inevitable consequence.
To say you know is to confess you are ignorant;
To confess you do not know is to glimpse the dawn of wisdom.

In Self Knowledge Lies Wisdom

Towards wisdom there is not a chartered path;
If it were so,
Then wisdom would already be
In the realms of the known;
Just as Truth must be discovered,
But no formula is known
That can lead to its discovery,
Discovery that ushers in ecstasy.
What we realise by cultivation
Is knowledge and not wisdom's illumination.
The first letter
Of the alphabet of wisdom is learnt,
When one sets out on the task
To dive deep in the ocean of self-knowledge.

Independent Assessment

Within the heart of the mob
There nestles a desire to be led;
And the more violent the voice of its leaders,
The more thoughtlessly they will obey.
Thus an artificial wall is erected
Between those that follow
And that which one may call reality.
The leaders' minds reek of perversion;
The streets are loud with the thunder of subversion.
It is not blind obedience that can illumine
The flame of independent assessment;
Nor can it annihilate
The demons of fear and hate.

The Mystery That Is Life

At night the candle flame flutters;
It dances, quivers and stutters.
But before the birth of dawn takes place,
In utter oblivion it hides its face.
Keep aloft the lantern of learning,
Let its light be for always burning.
If its oil goes out of circulation,
Into it pour your blood in transfusion.
Of existence birth is not the beginning;
Nor is death its final reckoning.
Let not your mind by conclusions be bound;
Many worlds beyond the far-off stars abound.
To be free is every man's birth right,
Of the weak, as also of the men of might.
Unravel the mystery that is life,
With its joys and tears, sorrow and strife.

Past Conquests

In the garden of my imagination fairies relax in the nude;
Before this exciting vision mute and enchanted I stood.
Their bodies exuded the sweet perfume of the rose,
As the sun for sleep beyond the horizon goes.
Where is the flame that kindled the candles yesterday?
Its fire stood extinguished, dead and cold it lay.
Frustrated, I entered into the cave of memories,
Where I heard the echoes of my past conquests and victories.
Alas! There comes an end to youthful enjoyment;
Like a passing shadow is its every success and achievement.

Humble In Its Power Of Profusion

Months, puffing and sweating with heat, were over.
The morning breeze came joyfully, on dancing feet;
The grass was spreading on the lawn its velvet green carpet
Nature was in a mood to give birth to the season of renewal,
And this desire to renew was imbedded in its innocence.
Life without the power of rejuvenation
Is another name for death, for stagnation.
Nature has for its domain freedom and understanding;
And silence in this world of din, noise, chaos and
Knowledge of the imponderables are its characteristics.
Humble, it thrives in its power of profusion;
While man, trumpeting his own ego, is lost in confusion.

Attachment And Detachment

Inwardly or outwardly,
Within the mind of every individual
Resides the will and desire to be,
Which is the beginning of complexity.
Seeing that finality has an end,
We seek the Infinite;
Seeing that mortality must end,
We try to find shelter in Immortality;
Seeing that Time must one day come to an end,
We endeavour to plunge into the river of Timelessness.
This oscillation between contradictions
Lengthens the distance to Freedom,
And does not bring about Redemption
From the strife and conflict of Life.
To seek means
Is to be a slave to attachment;
To seek a goal
Is not a sign of detachment.

The Kingdom Of My Mind

So many gods had set up their thrones
In the boundless kingdom of my mind;
At every stop I bent my knees,
Now in this temple, now in that shrine.
Disturbing shadows in endless profusion
Spread a dark net of chaos and confusion.
Baffled, I stood at the cross-roads of Life,
From where criss-crossed the human caravan.
They seemed like ants, crawling in all directions,
Oblivious, unaware of their ultimate destinations.
Disgusted, I took in my hand the sword of an iconoclast,
And broke to pieces the glittering idols,
That had imprisoned my mind in a golden cage.
Now I soar and sing with celestial delight
Under the smiling skies of Eternal Light.

The Dancing Derveshes

In the court-yard of the saint's sacred shrine,
The votaries cluster amidst hushed silence.
The muted drums awaken and soon find their voice,
And they keep up a rhythmic beat, gentle and soft.
The devotees feel mysterious tinglings all over thier bodies,
And their heads move from this side to that,
Like the ticking pendulum of a wall clock.
The drum beats become faster and louder,
And the pilgrims take a plunge into the river of motion,
Swinging their bodies with reverential grace.
The pitch of the drums rises to a crescendo,
As if they were speaking to some invisible god,
And the seething mass of humanity is transformed.
The court-yard opens its eyes in wonderment
And witnesses the frenzied spectacle of the Dancing Derveshes.

The Caravan Of Life

The darkness of the midnight embraces the swaying cedars;
The bay below chants her soft and gentle murmurs;
The croaking of frogs is heard above the stillness of the night;
The singing birds have silenced their dulcet throats;
The moon peeps through the thick and dark clouds,
And the moon-beams paint the field with a magic brush;
The shallow waters in the creek swirl in a happy dance;
The waves are fretful lest they miss their rendezvous
With the expected tide and feed themselves to the full
On the delicious dish of shining sand;
The enigmatic poet stirs the ocean of his imagination,
Wishing to thrust upwards from oblivion to Truth.
The disquiet of the night holds me in chains;
It has swallowed my sleep and left me tossing;
But the Caravan of Life is inexorably on the move;
It travels forward and onwards, on and on and on.

Man Will Have Become A Computer

The world is so complex, complicated, confusing!
Why are not men of all countries the same?
Then, there would be no difference based on nationality;
Then, books of poetry would read like prose,
And prose would declaim with the tongue of poetry,
All would have but one name—Man.
If we were to steam-roll all variety,
And establish an undisturbed equilibrium in society,
Perhaps, we would not be speaking
In terms of pacifists and politicians,
Or in terms of those that for ever are human happiness disturbing.
We would then have only an unending stretch of conformity;
Similarity will have blinded the vision of clarity.
Our horizons would not begin;
Our imagination would decay and die.
Man will have become a robot; perhaps, a computer.

The Knock At The Door

Life lifted the veil of mystery, but only
When it had reached the threshold of Death,
On the shore where past and distant dreams dissolve,
Past the raging, howling ocean of pain and despair.
Its beginning was an insignificant embryo,
But its giant hands were already straining
To unravel the secrets beyond the clouds and skies.
Its task stretched endlessly before it,
To sire new kingdoms of breath taking hopes,
To dominate over empires of science and speculation,
Hidden by the thin threads of spiders' webs.
Life soon found it was born amidst
An army of disappointments and frustrations,
And found itself bourne aloft by jealous minds,
That deprived it and denied it of its high purpose.
So, it awaits, expectingly, the knock at the door,
When Death will enter and rescue it from the pit of suffering,
To lead it into the realms of bliss and understanding.

Unprotesting Dust

My life is a hurricane that has broken the walls
Of its prison house, and now wanders in liberty,
Across the boundaries of continents and countries;
It is a wave that has lifted itself roaringly
Over the chest of the occean that howls uproariously.
My life is a handful of earth that mirrors the universe,
And I lift my hands high and dedicate them to God in thanks-giving.
Then, His magic resurrects motion and colour,
And its spirit exudes the fragrance of gentle poise.
All flesh is pounded to unprotesting dust,
And in the fullness of time dust again returns to life.
Through the succeeding cycles of seasons and years
Life willingly surrenders itself to the miracle of resurrection,
Which is like a tongue fashioned to foretell of higher things.

I Cannot Forget

Alas! I was once the envy of all eyes;
For my hand so many bended their knees.
Now I am no more desired, nor loved;
Love dead, cannot be resurrected again;
And so I have quitted the arena of competition
With the burden and pain of tears, unshed.
Now my passions have bended for the grave,
And I have begun to envy the ugliness of death.
Life and love are perishable and frail flowers;
Lovers lie like cold mutton beneath their tombs,
Over whom the green cypress trees brood.
Now my once dazzling beauty has jaded,
And my memory is burdened and saddened
With the thoughts of love of yesterday's nights.
Joy has deserted me and dimmed my eyes;
But I fondly recall the scenes of love and laughter;
I do not forget them, I candot forget them;
To me they are not like the forgotten dead.

Arm In Arm

Let me walk in the torrid heat of the mid-day sun,
Alone, all by myself,
Until I am purged of all my painful sorrow,
And the sweat oozes from every pore of my body.
At night, let me walk beneath the canopy of gloomy clouds,
After agonising restraint, ready to burst
And spray the day's heat with soothing showers.
Let me pour my dreams and countless thoughts
Into the bosom of that silence,
Where my Maker waits.
Let me walk, O God,
In the rain of reconciliation arm in arm with You.

The Rainbow Of Hope

A rainbow of hope glowed over the skies of my heart,
Only to dissolve with the awakening of the morning rays.
Now the sun is a hot furnance on my head,
And my summer clothes are drenched with sweat.
In the burning sands of life's waste-land
I wander and search for a shaded spot under a house or tree,
Where I could quench my thirst for shelter and relief.
But with patience and strength, both exhausted,
I am caught in a sand-storm, hot with fever,
And in that blinding storm
I yearn to see yesterday's rainbow of hope.

Not A Fitting Offering

Yesterday, you placed in the vase plastic flowers,
Joyously.
Today, you weep and water them with hot tears,
Sorrowfully.
The face of youthful years no longer
Glows;
Wrinkles have sunk deep into it ugly
Furrows;
The flowers continue to mask themselves with an artificial
Smile;
But they did not grow and have, alas, become
Senile;
Measured with the yard-stick of beauty their progress is
None;
Their colours have tarnished and faded in the heat of the
Sun;
Why do you such useless, lifeless flowers
Save?
They are not a fitting offering for your beloved's
Grave.

Death Is Not The End Of Life

You and I manouevre the dangerous tight wire;
Our finger tips tingle with the touch of love.
If you and I meet with a mishap, fall and die,
We will both chant, "Blissful resurrection",
And the church-bells from their tired throats
Will chime, "Where have they gone? Where?"
We will fix our gaze on the deathless stars,
That serenade under the balcony of the moon.
Then we will have learnt the lesson, alas,
That death had been always there,
Fixed, invisibly, to the hook of uncertainty,
And hidden under the weight of artificial flowers.
Then on us will have dawned the realisation
That Dealh is by no means the end of life,
Nor is it by any chance the very last terminal
At the farthest end of a dark and dusty tunnel.

In The Garden Of Eternity

I often wonder, what if they put me in a grave,
Beneath grey stones and earth bedewed wlth tears;
I shall not be dead, when life has run its course.
My Soul in unending sleep will not lie,
But, like a freed eagle, it will fly and fly.
Arisen, unseen, unheard and un-named,
My Soul will wing its way beyond time and space;
It will have conquered and vanquished the angel of death:
Only my mortal remains will be turned to dust.
It is only the ignorant ones that must believe
That the Soul dies and therefore they weep and grieve.
When the links of the chain of my life will snap,
My Soul will find its nest in the garden of Eternity.

Today Is The Same

Today is the same as countless todays of yesterday.
The same humiliations, the same attempted conciliations;
The same mask of smile before him whom I despise;
The same hidden dagger of hate which none espies;
The same loneliness, the same tormenting sadness,
Never succeeding to kiss the gossamer flower of happiness;
The same knowing feeling of power and undiscovered worth,
That may unacknowledged remain
Before I am lowered in my grave and covered with earth.
Will the great hour of glory which I aspire ever arrive?
Or will my annonymous existence continue to thrive?
Dreams more unachievable become with age,
Over inevitable failures it is pointless to rage.
I have passed all the lamp-posts of opportunities;
The file of age has blunted the edges of all my possibilities.

Memory Returns

In the fragrant mask of youthful spring
I bent my knees in the chapel of consecration;
My lust yielded to its fiendish thirst,
And my body continues to burn with its fever-heat.
The setting sun, in its spasms of pain,
Filtered through the scarlet cedars,
Arching in abandon in the lap of the rainbow.
Like a weary pilgrim, memory returns,
But does not stay to perform abulutions;
It is bent on pursuing its pilgrimage
With the walking-stick of knowledge in its hand,
And heads towards the holy place where incense burns,
Where the fatigued sun in the mirror of the sunset
Has blazened gossamer colours across the measureless horizon.

In The Archives Of My Heart

Let me scatter petals of the blossoms of happiness
Over the earth's sprawling ugliness and its depressing sadness.
Let me gather bits of beauty from the heaps of trouble
And plant a peach-tree bravely amidst this rubble.
Let me throw among the unwashed, uncared children a ball,
So that they may run and play and in fun over each other fall.
Let the baby in the pram lie in quiet innocent sleep,
So that the mother her rendezvous with her daily chores may
keep.
Let me gaze at the lovely, fruitful, shady tree,
Under which I may sing my songs, joyful, care-free.
Let me continue to visualise vineyards in mens' eyes;
Do not disturb my fancy whenever it soars and flies.
Let me inhale the wandering fragrance of roses and lilies,
Lest in my heart continue to gnaw reverse, regrets and pities.
Let my dream write its tiny, scarce readable letters,
Which will stand totally scrapped out in the morning's mirror.
Let me in the archives of my heart my awful secrets conceal,
Which even the hand of Death cannot to the world reveal.

If All This I Could See

I know one day my eyes will close in uninterrupted sleep;
Before that day arrives I wish them to awakened keep,
So that I could see all the children of Adam live
In a mutually cordial spirit of live and let live,
As birds, untroubled, their sleeping beauty unfurl,
And petals their scented umbrella open and uncurl,
So that on virgin beaches the immense, immeasureable sand
May continue to enjoy the freedom to wander or to stand;
So that the flag on every house proclaiming hate and enmity
May be uprooted and make room for friendship and fraternity;
So that man will have for all time outlawed the slaughter of war,
And made future history immune from this ignominous scar;
So that the hearts of men from betrayal be purified,
And deceit and treachery may for ever be buried.
If before I depart to the other world, all this I could see,
Then from the fears of Hell and the Hereafter I would be free.

Allana's poetry is deeply mystical, and his mysticism is universal, rather than selective. His poems deal mainly with such universal and eternal themes as Death, Eternity, the Hereafter, and Spiritual Union with the Infinite

It is for this reason that Dr. Krishna Srinvas, a well known poet of India, has commented ' To strife-torn modern mind, Allana's verses are *manna*. His soul roams from star to star and gathers lamps that will light many an inner Inn. He summons magical spirits from the vast inane and they willingly come. To be in the company of his pensive verses is an hour with Eternity in eternal questioning".

Allana is a diplomat of world repute. He has attended over one hundred international conferences. He has been Chairman of the Commission on Human Rights, as also Chairman of the United Nations Working Group to investigate the situation of Human Rights in Chile. He is currently the Chairman of the United Nations Trust Fund For Chile.

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